REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application.

Claims 1-20 are cancelled in favor of added claims 21-44.

Replacement sheets are attached for FIGS. 2, 3, 12, 14, and 15. Reference numerals 209, 210, and 211 are deleted in FIG. 2, and reference numeral 102 is deleted in FIG. 3. Typographical error are in FIG. 12, 14, and 15.

In addition to correcting clerical errors, the specification is amended to provide proper antecedent basis for reference numerals 500 of FIG. 5 (page 11, line 29), 805 of FIG. 8 (page 14, line 23), 1100 of FIG. 11 (page 17, line 31) and reference numerals 1502 and 1509 of FIG. 15 (page 21, lines 21 and 28). No change to the drawings is in order with regard to reference numeral 600 of FIG. 6 because page 13, line 3, recites "600."

The objection to claims 1 and 6 and the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, are obviated by the cancellation of claims 1-20. Added claims 21-44 comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and are clearly allowable over the art of record.

New claims 21-33 and 37-43 include limitations similar to those of previously submitted claims 14, 17, and 18.

New independent claim 21 is similar to previously submitted claim 14 by requiring a method of configuring a plurality of computer entities into a plurality groups. Each of the computer entities comprises at least one data processor, at least one data storage device, and a network connection for communicating with the other computer entities in the same group as the at least one data processor. The method comprises performing the following steps for each of the groups: assigning one of the computer entities to be a master computer entity of a particular group; the at least one data processor and at least one data storage device of the master computer entity being arranged to provide the functionality of the master computer entity to one or more slave computer entities of the particular group; assigning at least one of the other of the computer entities to be a slave computer entity candidate of the particular group; causing the at least one data processor and at least one data storage device of the master computer entity to apply at least one configuration setting to the at least one data storage device of the slave computer entity candidate of the particular group so the slave computer entity candidate of the particular group is set to have an equivalent functionality to a user as the master computer entity of the particular group. Each of the computer entities has security mode settings. A check of whether the slave computer entity candidate of the particular group has the same security mode setting

as the master computer entity of that group is performed. If the slave computer entity candidate of the particular group does not have the same security mode setting as the master computer entity of the particular group, then the slave computer entity candidate of the particular group is prevented from being a member of the particular group.

The Examiner incorrectly stated in the last Office Action that claim 14 was obvious as a result of Greaves (U.S. 6,195,687) and Applicants' so-called admitted prior art (APA). The Examiner said column 3, lines 58, through column 4, lines 1-4, and column 4, lines 26-46, of Greaves discloses the requirement of claim 14 for rejection of a slave computer entity being assigned to be a computer entity within a group if the slave computer entity does not have the same security mode setting as the master computer entity. Applicants have considered this portion of Greaves and are unable to find a basis for the Examiner's statements. If the Examiner persists in saying that column 3, lines 58-column 4, lines 1-4 and column 4, lines 26-46 of Greaves disclose the foregoing, she is requested to clearly state the basis for her position. In any event, Greaves does not disclose the step of preventing a slave computer entity candidate from being a member of a group including a master computer entity if the slave computer entity candidate does not have the same security mode

setting as the master computer entity, as required by claims 21 and 38.

The Examiner incorrectly stated in the last Office Action that claim 17 was obvious as result of Greaves and the Examiner's asserted prior art. The Examiner said column 4, lines 8-13, and column 4, lines 26-46, disclose rejecting a slave computer entity from a group if the slave computer entity is not configured to be the same domain as the master computer entity. Applicants also are unable to find a basis for the Examiner's statements in the relied-upon portion of Greaves and request the Examiner to clearly state the basis for her position in this regard. Applicants also note that Greaves does not disclose the step of preventing a slave computer entity candidate from being a member of a group including a master computer entity if the slave computer entity candidate does not have the same domain has the master computer entity, as required by claims 23 and 39.

The Examiner erroneously stated that claim 18 was obvious as a result of Greaves in view of the APA and Matsuda, (U.S. Patent Publication 2002/0133573). The Examiner incorrectly relied on Matsuda, paragraphs 11, 42, 43, 56, 64 and 66, to disclose the requirement for a master computer entity to check whether it can use a UDP broadcast based IP provisioning to connect to a slave computer by name if the master computer entity is using a DHCP configuration. Paragraph 11 deals with the prior art and indicates that prior to

Matsuda, a DHCP client sent out a DHCP discover broadcast looking for a DHCP server that can return settings to the client. If the DHCP server has a configuration for the requesting client, it sends a DHCP offer to the DHCP client that analyzes the offer and selects one of the servers. It is not seen how this prior art to Matsuda is relevant to former claim 18. Paragraphs 42 and 43 indicate that if a DHCP acknowledge is not received by a client networked office appliance (NOA), the NOA continues to broadcast DHCP Discovers until either another DHCP offer is received or a predefined amount of time allocated for a DHCP response expires. In one embodiment, a non-NOA is not configured to provide DHCP or equivalent services to the network including NOAs 200 and 210. Paragraph 56 indicates that if the state variable of server NOA 402 is not equal to a master or initial and the amount of time allotted for a DHCP response has expired, user intervention may be required to select whether the appropriate state variable of NOA 402 is master, temporary master or not master. If the user selects not master, server NOA 402 begins to broadcast DHCP Discovers. If the user selects temporary master, server NOA 402 provides configuration services only until a master server is found. Paragraph 64 indicates that a DHCP server is implemented on server 402 that contains a table that records network name conflicts and assignments. The DHCP table keeps track of a media access control (MAC) address of a device. The table also

contains fields for information such as the IP address of the device. Paragraph 66 indicates that after a suitable network name and network IP address are determined, all fields in the DHCP table are completed. The DHCP server informs the domain name server (DNS) of the network name and IP address assignments. The NOA server then returns the configuration information to the client NOA via a DHCP offer. The server NOA determines whether a DHCP decline is returned by the client NOA. If the client NOA returns a DHCP decline, the NOA server alerts a user to determine why the configuration was rejected. If no DHCP decline is received by the server, it is presumed that the client NOA accepted the configuration information and service begins.

While these portions of Matsuda are concerned with DHCP and IP, they certainly do not disclose the claim 25 requirement for determining if the master computer entity of the particular group can use UDP broadcast based IP provisioning to connect the slave computer entity candidate of the particular group by name; and responding to the master computer entity of the particular group being determined to be able to use UDP broadcast based IP provisioning to connect the slave computer entity candidate of the particular group by name and causing the master computer entity of the particular group to determine if the slave computer entity candidate of the particular group can use UDP broadcast based IP provisioning to connect to the particular group by name, and determining that said slave computer

entity candidate of the particular group has the DHCP configuration; and in response to said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group being determined not to have the DHCP configuration, preventing said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group from being a member of the particular group.

The references applied in the previous action fail to disclose the requirements of claims 22, 24 and 26 for performing the checking step or other steps before said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group joins the particular group so said slave computer entity candidate of the particular group is excluded from the particular group without ever joining the particular group.

The applied references also fail to disclose the claim 27 requirement for a first computer entity to be arranged for (a) checking, via a network, whether said slave computer entity candidate of a particular group has at least one of the same operating characteristics as the first computer entity, and (b) preventing said slave computer entity candidate from being a member of the group if said slave computer entity candidate does not have the same operating characteristics as a predetermined one of the operating characteristics of the first computer entity.

The references applied in the previous office action also fail to disclose the claim 34 requirement for a network having headless master and slave computer entities of a group, wherein the computer

entities of the group are coupled to each other and the master headless computer entity of the group is coupled to a management console so that all computer entities of the group appear to computer entities of the network outside the group as a single computer entity having the same functionality as the functionality of the master computer entity. Claim 35 adds to claim 34 the requirement for each of the headless computer entities to be arranged to act in the same manner as a single computer entity having resident application programs that were in the computer entities prior to the group being formed. Claim 37 adds to claim 34 limitations similar to those of claim 27, as discussed above.

The remaining dependent claims are allowable for the same reasons advanced for the claims upon which they depend, as well as for the features the dependent claims define.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, favorable reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested and deemed in order.

Applicants hereby request a one-month extension of time in which to respond to file this paper and hereby authorize the Commissioner to charge any required fees not otherwise provided for, including application processing, extension of time, and extra claims fees, to Deposit Account No. 08-2025.

Respectfully submitted,

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